

**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, November 19, 2013

Chairperson: Holly Morello, PRTC

Vice Chairperson: Anna McLaughlin, DDOT

Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos 202/962-3313

Item #1 Introductions

The Subcommittee members were asked to introduce themselves and to sign the attendance sheet

Holly Morello, PRTC staff, called the meeting to order by introducing herself and asking the rest of the attendees to do so.

Item #2 Minutes of September 17, 2013

Approval was sought for the September 17, 2013 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

There was a motion and a second to approve the minutes of the meeting as written.

Item #3 2013 State of the Commute Survey Draft Technical Report

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, reviewed the substantive changes made to the 2013 State of the Commute Survey draft Technical Report.

Mr. Ramfos reviewed the substantive comments made to the 2013 State of the Commute Survey Draft Technical Report. Mr. Ramfos also reviewed specific comments received by COG/TPB staff as follows:

- Question relating to the examination of the individual commuter income.
 - Mr. Ramfos replied that the survey examines household income and not individual income.
- Question relating to statistical validity in relation to the conclusions.
 - Mr. Ramfos responded that information was provided in the user's guide as a rule of thumb and all data in the 2013 SOC survey were analyzed through a chi-squared statistical testing method.
- Question relating to the expansion of the data ensuring representativeness of the sample for demographic characteristics in each of the 11 study areas.
 - Mr. Ramfos responded that the SOC survey is not a census, so the distributions for various demographic questions are subject to statistical variability. The expansion process applied a correction for imbalances in ethnicity at the individual jurisdiction level. No additional corrections were made for age or income.
- Question relating to response rate of household income level question (only 70%) "How confident can we be that the reported income levels are representative of all respondents?"

- Mr. Ramfos replied that the non-response rate to questions of this nature is typically between 20 to 40%. The US Census is at about a 20% non-response rate. Household income data is not a primary component of the SOC survey.
- Question requesting to show speeds the result from Table 12
 - Mr. Ramfos responded that this was an apples to oranges comparison regarding alternative mode and transit speeds and would include both travel and access/wait time, while driving; however, bike and walk would show only travel time.
- Question regarding 54% HOV Lane availability and Influence
 - Mr. Ramfos responded that this figure is not shown in any table, nor is it in Figure 36. It is the response to a "yes or no" question asking if the use of the HOV lane influenced their decision to use an alternative mode. It is the share of respondents who answered yes.

Mr. Ramfos also stated that data had been added to the document had been collected for the purpose of measuring the effects of alternative commute mode use on roadway congestion. Mr. Ramfos discussed pending guidance from USDOT regarding MAP21 and its metrics and their implementation and that the data collected may be useful in as part of regional goals that will be set in the future. All of the comments received and the corresponding responses are in the handout and he thanked those for taking the time to submit their comments and edits to the document which has helped to improve the document. Fatemeh Allahdoust thanked COG/TPB staff for inclusion of and addressing comments and would like to work on condensing the document and suggested adding an Executive Summary and appendices. Mr. Ramfos explained that the general public report would be easier to digest and that perhaps shorter write-ups of the various sections of the report could be produced and published in a brochure-like document or for use in an electronic format. Ms. Morello then asked the Subcommittee to endorse the draft 2013 State of the Commute Technical Report for release. The Subcommittee unanimously endorsed the document for release.

**Item #4 2013 Guaranteed Ride Home Draft Applicant Survey Report
Washington, DC Region**

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, reviewed the substantive changes made to the draft FY 2013 Guaranteed Ride Home Applicant Report for the Washington, DC region.

Mr. Ramfos reviewed the draft 2013 Guaranteed Ride Home Applicant Report. He indicated that the primary road/network data was added and that data had been collected for the purpose of measuring the effects of GRH on roadway congestion. Mr. Ramfos discussed pending guidance from USDOT regarding MAP21 and its metrics and their implementation and that the data collected may be useful in as part of regional goals that will be set in the future. He also indicated that legends were added to tables on page 25 and that the narrative was adjusted to match the tables, which may have been out of synch due to rounding errors in the body and in Appendix D, which is an historical summary. Keith Bounds, MDOT, supported by Mark Sofman, MCCSS, and George Clark, TCCSMD, added "Washington" should be added to the cover page to match the header text and differentiate from the GRH Applicant Survey Report for Baltimore. Mr. Ramfos added that the results from the document would be used in the TERM Analysis, Congestion Management Process and the region's Air Quality conformity. Ms. Morello then asked the Subcommittee to endorse the draft 2013 Guaranteed Ride Home Applicant Survey Report for release. The Subcommittee unanimously endorsed the document for release.

**Item #5 2013 Guaranteed Ride Home Draft Applicant Survey Report
Baltimore, MD Region**

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, reviewed the substantive changes made to the draft FY 2013 Guaranteed Ride Home Applicant Report for the Baltimore, MD region.

Mr. Ramfos reviewed the draft 2013 Guaranteed Ride Home Applicant Report for the Baltimore region. He indicated that the report was primarily the same report produced for the Washington region and is for the current evaluation period, beginning with program rollout in October 2010.

Mr. Ramfos went on to address comments from Subcommittee members including clarification of participating staff from local jurisdiction members and the preparation of the questionnaire on page 3, and inclusion of Fairfax County participants (6%) because of their work location. Ms. Allahdoust, VDOT, asked if registration was available for commuters to participate in both Washington and Baltimore GRH programs. Mr. Ramfos responded that participants were only permitted one registration, in either the Washington or Baltimore Programs, based on where the participant worked.

Mr. Ramfos indicated that text on page 11 to match the corresponding figure 4 and that language on Page 15 of the draft report was clarified. Mr. Ramfos also added that on page 17 that the primary road/network data was added and that data had been collected for the purpose of measuring the effects of GRH on roadway congestion. On Page 30, the narrative was adjusted to match the percentages shown in Figure 25. The Subcommittee endorsed this report for release. Mr. Ramfos indicated a final version of the both the Washington and Baltimore reports would be made available in both electronically and in print format.

Item #6 2013 Bike to Work Day Draft Event Report

Mark Hersey, COG/TPB staff, provided a brief to the Subcommittee on the 2013 Bike to Work Day report.

Mr. Hersey, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the draft 2013 Bike to Work Day report. Mr. Hersey indicated that all 70 pit stops contributed data to the BTWD report. On page 24, media coverage and social media coverage was detailed. Local news coverage was expanded and captured by the report as well. Registration numbers vary and the BTWD narrative reflects total registrations limited to one participant, one registration whereas pit stop numbers reflect total registrations, even if participants registered at multiple pit stops. Mr. Hersey established a comment period and asked that all corrections be submitted by December 13, 2013. George Clark, TCCSMD, requested Elaine Lancaster's name be removed from the report and inquired if his corrections to the previous version draft document had been received. Mr. Ramfos stated that the most recent document would be posted, incorporating previous comments from the BTWD Steering Committee and will be used as the foundation for any further comments (as posted to SharePoint). All comments should be submitted to doccomments@mwcog.org.

Item #7 Capital Bikeshare Expansion to Montgomery County

Mark Sofman, Montgomery County Commuter Services, provided a brief to the Subcommittee on the Expansion of Capital Bikeshare to Montgomery County.

Mr. Sofman, Montgomery County Commuter Services, provided a brief to the Subcommittee on the expansion of Capital Bikeshare to Montgomery County. September 27 was when the rollout occurred in Rockville with County officials and staff. The Montgomery County Bikeshare program was launched in cooperation with the cities of Rockville and Takoma Park, funded by the County with JARC, MDOT grants, and local funds. The southern part of the county has 250 bikes with 30 stations including Rockville, Shady Grove, Bethesda, Friendship Heights, Medical Center and Takoma Park. Staff will work north to expand CaBi's reach. Mr. Sofman stated anecdotally he has noticed an increase in bicyclists in and around Rockville and the Montgomery County offices.

Item #8 I-95 and Capital Beltway Express Lanes Project Update

Michael McGurk, TransUrban, updated the Subcommittee on the status of the I-95 and Capital Beltway Express Lanes project.

Mr. McGurk, TransUrban, updated the Subcommittee on the status of the I-95 and Capital Beltway Express Lanes project. He mentioned that the one year anniversary of the 495 Express Lanes and the ramp-up to opening the 95 Express Lanes. Mr. McGurk mentioned an increase in the usage of the 495 Express Lanes by carpoolers and transit providers such as OmniRide and the Tyson's Express because of increased trip time reliability. He also mentioned the need for increased employer outreach in areas which neighbor Express Lanes entry and exit ramps. A question was raised concerning congestion pricing and Mr. McGurk commented that lanes were tolled based on their volume in order to keep the lanes free flowing as often as possible.

Other discussion occurred centering on surveying Express Lanes users based on origin and destination and producing reports on time savings.

95 Express Lanes is nearing 60% completion and will extend from roughly VA-610 in Stafford County to Edsall Road in Fairfax County. Mr. McGurk emphasized the importance of outreach to commuters for this project because it is converting an existing roadway facility from one method of management to another. He also reiterated the importance of all commuters having an EZ-PASS FLEX if they wish to take advantage of the carpooling/vanpooling benefit and stated that the lanes would be patrolled with the help of the Virginia State Police.

Item #9 FY 2015 Work Program Development and Commuter Connections Strategic Plan

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, provided a brief to the Subcommittee on the draft FY 2015 Commuter Connections Work Program and the Commuter Connections Strategic Plan. Updates to the plan were reviewed and comment periods were established for both documents.

A PowerPoint presentation was given by Mr. Ramfos who gave an overview of Commuter Connections including program benefits and highlights of what is new with the program and budget as well as next steps for the CCWP.

Mr. Ramfos gave the definition of Commuter Connections as shown in the Commuter Connections Strategic Plan. Commuter Connections benefits local jurisdictions by helping to manage and reduce congestion and improve air quality which will benefit commuters, businesses with goods movement and tourist travel. The program also assists jurisdictions with attracting and retaining employers. In turn, employers benefit through their recruitment efforts and improve their ability

to retain employees. Commuter Connections also provides workers with more commuting options that lead to an improved quality of life through the reduction of stress, daily commuting costs, and the time it takes them to get to and from work.

Mr. Ramfos then showed a geographic map that outlined the service area of the Commuter Connections program services. The central service area is the Washington Region's 8-hour non-attainment area. The Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) service area is much larger than the 8-hour non-attainment area for workers eligible for the GRH program, and even larger for workers who use Commuter Connections' ridematching services. A chart with American Community Survey Census rankings for carpools and transit use for MSA areas shows that the Washington DC region ranks 3rd in the nation in total percentage of carpoolers and transit users. Total daily impacts of the Commuter Connections program for VT, VMT, NOx, and VOC were shown based on the results from the FY 2009-2011 Commuter Connections TERM Analysis report. Federal planning regulations require the TPB to approve a congestion management process (CMP) which includes Transportation Demand Management as part of the metropolitan transportation plan and Commuter Connections is the major demand management component of the region's CMP. Commuter Connections also provides transportation emission reduction measure benefits for inclusion in the air quality conformity determination approved by the TPB. This is part of the annual update of the region's CLRP and TIP. Impacts from the program may be needed to address future regional or national transportation greenhouse gas emission targets. Results from Commuter Connections program impacts may also be used in new federal MAP-21 legislation performance measure requirements.

Next, Mr. Ramfos explained that Commuter Connections has been shown to be a highly cost-effective way to reduce vehicle trips (VT), vehicle miles of travel (VMT), and vehicle emissions associated with commuting in the region. The overall program's cost-effectiveness is based on the results of the Commuter Connections TERM Analysis for VT, VMT, NOx, and VOC. Mr. Ramfos then showed the comparison of the FY 2014 CCWP budget to the proposed FY 2015 CCWP budget and stated that there are some slight variations for some of the program areas. Mr. Ramfos stated that there is a 3.5% increase in the budget.

Next, The FY 2014 CCWP also has some new features and projects, including the printing and distribution of the general public report for the 2013 State of the Commute and the FY 2015 Applicant Placement Rate Study would also be completed as well as the completion of the 2012 – 2014 TERM Analysis Report. Mr. Ramfos then discussed the next review and approval steps for the document. A comment period of December 6th was set and the document will be posted to SharePoint. He stated that the Subcommittee would be asked to endorse the document at its January meeting.

Next, Mr. Ramfos reviewed some minor updates that were made to the Commuter Connections Strategic Plan (2013 -2014) including under the Operations Center where the word "tablet" was added in the ongoing maintenance of the TDM software system and in the Monitoring and Evaluation section where results would be included in the regional air quality conformity determination and Congestion Management Process. Mr. Ramfos asked Subcommittee members to review the plan and submit comments no later than December 6th. He also stated that the document distributed today is a short version of the plan and that a more formal document is also available on line under the Publications section of the Commuter Connections web site. The Subcommittee will be asked to endorse the updated plan at its January meeting.

Item #10 1st Quarter Budget Report, 1st Quarter CCWP Progress Report
Barbara Brennan, COG/DTP staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Budget Report and the Quarterly Progress Reports.

Ms. Brennan discussed the FY 2014, 1st Quarter budget report. She stated that the narratives and data collection sections in the CCWP quarterly Progress Report directly relate to the work accomplished between July and September 2013. Ms. Brennan asked if there were any questions or comments.

Item #11 Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting

Subcommittee members are encouraged to contact Nicholas Ramfos with any particular agenda items they may be interested in seeing on the next agenda.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2014 at 12 noon.